

Palestine Perspectives

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■ Victims of Victims

Native American Peruvian tribe converts to Judaism; under Israel's "Law of Return," its members become Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank—p. 7

■ Israel's Decolonization Crisis

Israeli expert on decolonization explains how the Palestinian intifada has loosened Israel's grip on Palestine—p. 8

■ In Cold Blood

A trial in Israel reveals the ugly face of its "iron fist" policy of repression in occupied Palestine—p. 10

■ Frighten the Children

Israeli soldiers practice "mock execution" on children in the Palestinian town of Rafah—p. 11

■ Dan Quayle

An open letter to Vice President Quayle about his misplaced concern for the Zionist image—p. 14

■ Israel's Ailments

Israeli intellectuals diagnose the ills of their society—*Back Cover*

PRISONS WITHIN PRISONS

Who Speaks for Israel?

Until recently, Israel evaded peace by claiming that on the Arab side "there is no one to talk to." After it became absurd to claim that the Palestinians did not exist, an obscenity in which Israel's leaders wallowed for a long time, they tried to achieve the same objective by raising the question of "Who speaks for the Palestinians." The idea was to convey the impression that Israel was eager to make peace with the Arabs if they only had someone who could speak on their behalf.

Israel is still trying, of course. The Israeli government's proposal for holding elections, under its supervision, in the West Bank (minus Jerusalem) and Gaza is intended more than anything else to give a new lease on life to the myth that the Palestinians have no legitimate spokesmen and representatives. Israel seems totally oblivious to the fact that no country in the world buys its myths anymore.

The irony is not only that Israel has been the least enthusiastic about its own "peace initiative", but also that it is so politically fragmented that the stereotype it had tried for a long time to stick to the Arabs fits it perfectly. "Who speaks for Israel" is a question that no one today can answer with assurance. Is it Shamir? Is it Peres? Is it an old rabbi in Brooklyn? Is it an even older rabbi in Israel? No one can say. Shamir heads a truncated government; Peres scrounges around for an alternate government; and the rabbis hold no public office but hold a veto on who governs. In the meantime, the Israeli public is driven by disgust to street demonstrations, shouting for political reforms.

Peace in the Middle East is too important to be left to the chaotic Israeli political process

Where did the pundits go, who used to relish advising the Arabs to "get their act together?" Why aren't they after Israel? Is it possible that "Israel's friends" find it convenient that there is no one to speak for Israel, convenient because it justifies shelving the peace process?

Perhaps something good will come out of the Israeli mess. Perhaps people in the U.S. government will finally understand that peace in the Middle East is too important to be left to the mercy of the chaotic Israeli political process. Perhaps they will come to understand the futility of the argument that pressuring Israel is not the way to make peace in the Middle East.

The Palestinians are frequently chastised for not speaking with "one voice," (something which we thought was un-American!). In fact Congress passed a law requiring the State Department to report on any deviations from the approved Palestinian position. But at least, *there is Palestinian consensus* as well as Palestinian dissent. As for Israel, we know that there is dissent; but *where is the consensus?* Dissent from a consensus is democracy; but dissent without consensus is chaos.

Finally, a question to the American Jewish community. Why is criticism of Israeli intransigence and brutality unacceptable because it is interference in Israeli affairs, but making and unmaking Israeli governments by a Brooklyn rabbi is permissible? Isn't covering up for Israel getting to be too burdensome on the conscience?



Palestine Perspectives

Number 47
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In This Issue

Forum

Travesty Beyond Words 3
Women in Black 3

From the Israeli Press 5

In Brief 6

News & Views

Victims of Victims	7
The Falashas In Israel	7
Abu Jihad Remembered	7
Israel's Decolonization Crisis	8
In Cold Blood	10
Frighten the Children	11

Washington Watch

On Israeli Censorship	12
Funding Repression	13
Dear Vice President	14

World View

Thatcher on Soviet Colonists 15

Back Cover

Israel's Ailments

Cover Photo: Blocked entrance to refugee camp in the West Bank, UNRWA photo

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A Travesty Beyond Words: Eyewitness Report

By Carol Carruthers Sims-Jones

In February, my husband and I spent two weeks in the West Bank and Gaza on a medical mission sponsored by the Kennedy School of Government's Institute for Social and Economic Policy in the Middle East. The purpose was to consult with medical personnel in our various fields of specialty and observe the health-care situation. There were 17 of us from all over the United States: 13 doctors, a nurse, two psychologists and myself, a clinical mental health counselor.

Since the beginning of the intifada 28 months ago, the number of Palestinian patients seen for bullet wounds, beatings, tear-gassings, burns, stonings and other health problems due to Israel's military presence has risen sharply. The overcrowded conditions of both in- and outpatients was apparent in every one of the approximately 15 hospitals and clinics we visited in Gaza, Jerusalem, Nablus, Ramallah, Qalqilya, Bethlehem, and several refugee camps. Many facilities were antiquated and inadequate, skills outdated, and medical information oblique. They have no infrastructure within which to share knowledge, statistics or equipment. Also, there are very few psychological services available; I encountered many depressed, anxious and distressed individuals. I believe that their faith and large family-support systems keep them integrated. The Palestinians I met had hope for an emerging liberated nation, visions of peace, and anticipation of freedom. These are healthy coping resources, but how much longer can they maintain them under the present tyrannical and devastating occupation?

We were shocked by what we witnessed. We had never been to the Middle East and had not learned anything from our media that prepared us for what we saw. The Israelis seemed to have permeated every facet of the Palestinians' existence by overt killing, wounding, house demolitions and sealings, expulsions, curfews, tree uprooting, school and university closings, detention and imprisonment without charge or due process, and by placing Israeli settlements in Palestine—which we subsidize—to name a few.

"A solution to the occupation problem must be found before an entire country and culture are destroyed."

The covert oppression is just as maiming. The "soft rationing," such as "administrative" delays in licensing ambulance drivers or issuing permits to remodel or build badly needed hospitals; detaining medical equipment, supplies and medication; closing towns, town arrests, and institutional closures; firing doctors from government hospitals; closing parks, beaches and other recreational facilities; inordinate detentions at the numerous military checkpoints (we went through 12 one day, going from Jerusalem to Nablus and Qalqilya, then back to Jerusalem)—all have served as harmful forces to the Palestinian people.

(continued on page 4)



Women in Black

By Simona Sharoni

Even though the intifada is now in its third year, Israeli society has yet to understand the new political reality created by the Palestinian uprising. Instead of realizing that the intifada has created the basic conditions for the start of a conflict resolution process, most Israelis only see the failure of the Israeli army to suppress Palestinian struggle and lock themselves in what appears to be a tangle of helplessness, hopelessness and denial.

We won't give up, or shut up, or put up with the current version of reality.

Even people with short and self-centered memories should know that struggles for self-determination and independence inevitably lead to statehood. The Israeli peace movement seems to be aware of the new reality, but it has failed to organize on the scale that it had done during the invasion of Lebanon. Some women groups, however, have organized in response to the challenges that the intifada has introduced into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The intifada has triggered something latent in Israeli women and has led to the formation of three new women's protest groups: "Shani-Women Against the Occupation," which encourages political activism among women; "Women for Women Political Prisoners," which supports women detainees and keeps a watch on prison conditions; and "Women in Black."

"Women in Black" is a protest group which includes both Israeli and Palestinian women. The group emerged in January 1988, right after the intifada began, and started its protests with weekly silent vigils. The vigils are held in Paris Square, a busy intersection in the center of Jerusalem. Within weeks, similar groups began similar vigils in Tel Aviv and Haifa, and now there are more than twenty groups of "Women in Black" throughout Israel. In solidarity with the struggle of "Women in Black" in Israel, symbolic vigils are also being held by women's groups in Europe and the United States.

Every Friday afternoon, at 1 p.m., "Women in Black" come together and stand silently for an hour. They dress

(continued on page 4)

TRAVESTY (continued from page 3)

We were appalled by the infringement of basic human rights as we know them, by unprovoked attacks on children walking home from school, by the soldiers entering schools to terrorize, harass or sometimes beat up the children—5, 6, 7, 8-year olds! We observed this frequently. It was heart-breaking, enraging, a travesty beyond words.

We were told, many times, of the incidents of tear gas being thrown into schools, homes, and even hospitals. Yes, tear gas can kill, and it can cause miscarriages or premature births. (This was the subject my husband was asked to study). The canisters we saw clearly stated, "For outdoor use only!" They were made in Pennsylvania in 1988. The U.S. sends 3 billion dollars a year to Israel. The tear gas comes from America; our taxes pay for these atrocities.

What we saw appeared to be a war between David and Goliath: The Palestinian children throwing stones at Israeli soldiers and the soldiers shooting back with live ammunition with Uzis, rubber bullets from M-16s, and plastic bullets which are like high-velocity bullets at close range and consist of 70% zinc, 20% glass and 10% plastic. They always kill or debilitate. Gun butts or "billy clubs" were used on 9, 10, 11-year olds who painted their beliefs on a wall, called soldiers names, or threw a stone. The unarmed Palestinian is no match for the well-armed Israeli soldier.

We saw many wounded patients daily, victims primarily of shootings and beatings. Approximately 70% of the patients were under 25 years, 25% under 15, and 5% older adults. I consulted with a mother whose 2-year-old daughter had her eye shot out in her own courtyard by a soldier on a nearby roof. Naturally, the mother was distraught and I, disgusted and angry. She seemed to be experiencing post-traumatic stress. The daughter would be destined to live with a glass eye for a lifetime.

WOMEN (continued from page 3)

in black and carry signs in Arabic, Hebrew and English calling for an end to the occupation.

"Women in Black" are frequently favorite targets for counter demonstrations by right wing Jewish groups, and they are often harassed and subjected to insults and offensive comments laced with sexual innuendoes. Their activism seems to be threatening to certain segments of Israeli society.

The Palestinian uprising has given us a chance to reevaluate the occupation and the militaristic society in which we live

In an article on women and the politics of peace protest during the war in Vietnam, Ruth Rosen explained the attitude of some men toward women's political involvement. For some reason, she wrote, men said to women: you are less feminine when you participate in those other things; you are no longer attractive if you do so. I like you quiet and submissive. When you confront the world outside the home, the world where I operate, then I feel that you are a challenge to me. Perhaps this is also a reason why women protesters are harassed in Israel.

But "Women in Black" are proud of being a challenge and are determined to continue their protest until the occupation ends.

We visited many homes, savoring the warm hospitality and sumptuous Arab feasts prepared for us. The conversation was the same everywhere we went: discussion of that day's brutalities, that person's imprisonment and torture (often leaving wounds such as impotence and sterility). We listened to a child's tale of daily harassment by the Israeli soldiers, a woman's story of her illegal 42-day detention and inhumane treatment, descriptions of how dogs are poisoned so that families will have no warning of expected "visits" the soldiers make to their homes, and on and on and on. We listened with great sadness....

"We were appalled by the infringement of basic human rights as we know them... It was heart-breaking, enraging, a travesty beyond words"

The situation is complex and the answers are not easy, but a solution to the occupation problem must be found before an entire country and culture are destroyed. Witnessing the infringement, disenfranchisement, and disregard for the human dignity of the Palestinians by the Israelis was a wrenching experience, yet one that I am thankful to have had. It raised my awareness and increased my prayers for peace in that lovely land of so much history and a culture rich with tradition. I pray for freedom for the Palestinians, that they may have the respect deserved by every member of the family of man. I hope that each of you will add your voice so that we might be heard in this country and have an impact on Israeli withdrawal from a land that clearly does not belong to them; so that Jerusalem can be the international city we may all claim; and so that Palestine will finally belong to the Palestinians. □

Rachel Osrowitz, a "woman in black" and editor of the feminist magazine *Noga*, points out some of the reasons that led to the emergence of "Women in Black" and women protest in general. "The Palestinian uprising," she said, "has given us a chance to reevaluate our thinking about the occupation, about the militaristic society in which we live, and about the fact that our voice as women is missing in government and in policy decisions." She complained that women in mixed protest groups are excluded from decision making and are made to deal with trivial matters.

Rachel Ostrowitz expressed both the motivation and determination of "Women in Black." She said: "Our marginality is not acceptable anymore. Our oppression is not acceptable nor is the oppression of others... The women of the Israeli peace movement will not allow their senses to be numbed by the daily killings. We will not accept oppression, discrimination or exploitation as parts of our political system... We won't give up, or shut up, or put up with the current version of reality."

Another "woman in black," Lea Shakdiel, warned in a women's peace convention last year that although women have been in a better position than men to promote social and political change, history shows that when the period of distress ends, men are eager to take power back from women. But "Women in Black" have shown themselves to be so resolute that this time Israeli and Palestinian women will not let history repeat itself. □

Simona Sharoni is an Israeli "Women in Black" activist. She is currently a Graduate Fellow at George Mason's University's Center for Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

Deconstructive Criticism

Whatever else they may be, Israel's leaders are not Great Communicators. It seems that every time they open their yaps, confusion reigns, and the outside world gets a needle up its collective nose.

As sure as night follows day, each government utterance must be followed by clarifications, explanations and denials. Then as sure as day follows night—guess what?—more confusion reigns. And then the leadership grumbles that no one understands us. And you know what? the leaders are right.

The world of course is at fault for not having gone to Hebrew school. Worse, it lacks the tradition of talmudic training necessary for interpreting even the simplest remarks of Israeli leaders. No wonder other states view us as a bunch of looney-tunes. We Jews can read the subtext. Outsiders just don't understand.

Let's take recent examples:

1. I am resigning from the cabinet because this government's peace plan will lead to war [Ariel Sharon].

Observers in Washington or London or Bonn no doubt find it impossible to grasp what to us is such a simple declarative sentence. But that's because non-Israelis just don't understand. They don't realize that the general who made that statement knows from bitter experience how planning for peace can lead to war. That's why he planned a war in Lebanon back in the summer of '82 that would lead to peace.

Outsiders just don't appreciate the fact that Israel has always favored peace and has always had war. They can't comprehend the notion that talking with our enemies might mean that our enemies might stop sounding like our enemies—and then where would we be? We might wind up talking peace, which as we all know would inevitably lead to war.

No, it's much better to maintain total opposition to our enemies, because that way they'll maintain total opposition to us and we'll all know where we stand: in the comforting familiarity of a state of war—and by gum, we'll stay there until peace breaks out....

2. For this big wave of immigrants, we need a big Israel [Yitzak Shamir on Soviet Jews].

Well, hell, when the man said big, we know he didn't literally mean big. He may have meant capacious, voluminous, amplitudinous, comprehensive, spacious, extensive, whopping, humongous, macroscopic, vast, mighty, grandiose, Brobdingnagian, considerable, king-sized, jumbo, mammoth, large-scale, massive, huge, immense, enormous, elephantine, prodigious, colossal, gigantic, monumental, oversized, unsmall—but for heaven's sake, he didn't mean to suggest big, like all those foreign governments deceived themselves into thinking.

Outsiders make the small-minded mistake of viewing big solely in terms of size. How many times must we repeat the fact that only 1 percent of the Soviet immigrants are settled in the West Bank (while the vast majority remain unsettled in absorption centers)?

No, we insiders knew all along that the prime minister meant a big wave of immigrants must be met with big hearts. And big budgets. And big plans. And big thinking. And big meetings. And big bureaucracy. Get all that in motion, and big aliyah is no big deal.

On the Collapse of the Israeli Government

"Much like Shakespeare's Thane of Cawdor in Macbeth, nothing became Yitzhak Shamir so much, in his role as head of the national unity government, as his way of leaving it. True to his career from the days of Lehi [Stern terrorists], Shamir solved his problem by setting up a hit." □

Allan E. Shapiro, *Jerusalem Post International*, 24 March 1990

"This is not the state we hoped to build when we came on aliyah [immigration] nearly 60 years ago. My late husband, a town planner with the government, put many cities on Israel's map from Eilat to Kiryat Shmona. We accepted the difficult times with optimism and constructive criticism.

I am still proud of many great achievements. But my hopes are shattered. This is not the free society we wanted to build for ourselves, our children, grandchildren and future generations.

Our political decisions are in the frail hands of a revered rabbi, nearly a century old. For men with long white beards to young Talmudic students in yeshivot and up to well-seasoned haredi Knesset members, nobody can vote according to individual decisions. They all repeat and do what their rabbi tells them to do. This is mind boggling.

Is this the state our soldiers have to defend with their lives? Is this the democracy thousands of new immigrants want to find in Israel? Our so-called democracy still gives its citizens a voice. Let us shout: "Enough is enough!" □

Lilit Pavell, *The Jerusalem Post International*, 7 April 1990

And hey, is it our fault that to our prime minister everything looks big?

3. We will break their bones [Yitzak Rabin, on Palestinian protesters].

Yep, just leave it to the U.S. State Department to get all human rightish about words like break and bones. We Israelis know the defense minister simply meant weaken the backbone, or spine, of the intifada leadership.

This of course would be accomplished by calling in the chaps for coffee. Then, after the appropriate pleasantries, about the weather and crops and the exchange of a few piquant proverbs and a couple of jokes, we would obliquely mention our displeasure with the riots and suggest that they call them off. Being reasonable fellows, they would no doubt comply.

No, we insiders understand that violence is strictly the language of the world's less advanced societies. And on the off chance that the leadership of the uprising chooses not to listen to our language, we could always try firing into the air.

And hey, is it our fault if the air we fire into happens to lie between the muzzles of our rifles and some stonethrower's chest? □

Matt Nesvisky, *The Jerusalem Post International*, 31 March 1990

In Brief

■ **Leaderless Israel**—No Israeli political figure enjoys the confidence of more than a small fraction of Israeli opinion. An April poll showed that the three most likely leaders (Rabin, Shamir, Peres) received less than 20% each, indicating that fragmentation is a deeply-rooted Israeli problem.

■ **Prisoners in Cages**—Israel is punishing Palestinian political detainees in the notorious Ansar 3 prison by incarcerating them in small metal cages. Quoting the Israeli paper *Hadasot* of 5 April 1990, the Palestine News Agency said that some prisoners are confined in small cages inside a larger cage, much like animals in a zoo.

■ **German Reparations**—Talks between Israel and East Germany apparently focus on Israeli demands for financial indemnities for the holocaust rather than the restoration of diplomatic relations. Israel wants East Germany to pay reparations to the state of Israel as well as to survivors and their heirs, in an arrangement similar to one reached with West Germany earlier.

■ **Pollard Protests**—Convicted spy Jonathan Pollard wants a retrial. He wants to withdraw his guilty plea because, his lawyers say, federal prosecutors violated his plea bargaining agreement when he was given the maximum life sentence.

■ **U.S. Flag Burned**—The Israeli racist “Kach” movement, which advocates the expulsion of all Palestinians, burned a U.S. flag in a demonstration in Jerusalem on 29 March 1990. The demonstration, held in front of the American Consulate in West Jerusalem, was to protest U.S. “pressure” on Israel to make peace with the Palestinians. “Kach” is led by U.S. citizen Rabbi Meir Kahane.

■ **Soldier Slaps Mayor**—An Israeli soldier slapped a Palestinian mayor at an army road block in the West Bank. The mayor of Anabta, in the Tulkarm area, was stopped and questioned on 15 April, and his identity card was taken by one of the Israeli soldiers. When another soldier demanded the mayor’s identity card, and the mayor told him that it had been taken by one of his comrades, the soldier slapped and threatened the mayor.

■ **Arrow Missile**—Israel will test-fire the new Arrow ballistic missile in late June 1990. The missile is a U.S.-financed weapon being developed in Israel under the Star Wars program.

Prisoners Escape

Five Palestinian political prisoners escaped from the notorious Ansar 3 detention center. Three of them made it to freedom across the Egyptian border, about two miles away, and two were caught on their way to Egypt. The prisoners were said to be members of popular committees in the Gaza Strip.

After the escape, the Israeli commander of Prison #7 at Ansar (Ketziot) detention center was dismissed from his job. Also, two officers received suspended sentences, and the commander of the detention camp and two soldiers were reprimanded for negligence which made it possible for the Palestinian detainees to escape.

The escaped prisoners were present for the 10:30 count during the night of their escape (Saturday, 10 March), but they were missing when the morning count (between 3 and 4 a.m.) was taken. They had made a hole in the fence surrounding the camp and disappeared during the night. The camp is surrounded by barbed wire and watch towers, and it is patrolled by armed Israeli soldiers.

The five prisoners involved are Omar Mahmoud Arini, 26; Amin Ahmad Abed, 26; Imad Samir Mahmoud, 25; Rafiq Yousef Hamdounah, 27; and Anwar Muhammad Abu Habl, 25. All of the prisoners are from Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. The first three crossed the border into Egypt, and the last two were recaptured by the Israelis. Ansar detention camp is said to have about 6,000 Palestinian political prisoners, many of them administrative detainees who have not been charged or convicted. □

■ **PPS Reopens**—After being gagged for two years by the Israeli occupation authorities, the Jerusalem-based Palestine Press Service was allowed to reopen in March 1990. PPS was first closed in March 1988, when Israel clamped wide ranging media censorship in the occupied territories.

■ **Radio Ban Lifted**—Finally the Israeli government lifted a ban on contacting Arab amateur radio operators. Until recently, Israeli amateur radio operators were forbidden to converse with Arab counterparts and violators risked losing their licenses.

■ **Israeli Quarrels**—Israel holds the world’s record in litigation, according to an Israeli judge. In a country of Israel’s size, he said, half a million law suits, plus 310,000 cases handled by small claims and traffic courts is an “absurd number.”

■ **Voice of America**—America’s “strategic asset” in the Middle East (Israel) is outdoing itself in finding reasons why a Voice of America radio station should not be allowed in Israel. Some say its transmission towers would hinder Israeli air force training, and others voice dire predictions to Israel’s ecology.

Now, Israel has a new reason. *The Jerusalem Post International* (24 March 1990) reports that “a leading environmental health expert” says that “the relay transmitter could cause cancer.”

■ **Intifada Deaths**—The Palestine News Agency, WAFA, quoted Unified Leadership of the Uprising sources saying that 20 Palestinians were killed by Israeli troops and armed vigilantes in the month of March 1990. The agency said that the March toll brought the total number of Palestinian deaths since the beginning of the intifada in December 1987 to 1,092.

■ **Herzog Threatened**—A new Israeli underground terrorist group called Ha Sikarikim has pronounced Israeli President Chaim Herzog a “traitor” and sentenced him to die. The sentence, said the right wing terrorist group, would be carried out at a “suitable time.” The group, which has also passed “death sentences” against a number of Israeli legislators for advocating negotiations with the PLO, has torched cars and homes of a number of Israeli figures.

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Victims of Victims

Native Americans Settle in Palestine

The expression that the Palestinians are the victims of victims has acquired a new meaning. About 50 South American Indians recently became Israeli Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank. The new settlers belong to a Native American tribe from Peru which converted to Judaism.

According to the *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, Oklahoma, 4 March 1990), two tribal elders got interested in Judaism 40 years ago, and twenty years later "the whole tribe abandoned Christianity and began living a Jewish life style." Three years ago, an Israeli rabbi heard of the tribe and initiated their formal conversion. Now, they have become Jewish settlers in Elon Moreh settlement near Nablus in the occupied West Bank.

The Falashas in Israel

Second Class Jews in the Jewish State

In one of its most highly publicized publicity stunts in years, Israel "rescued" thousands of Ethiopian Jews and took them to Israel. But reality soon took over, and the Falashas discovered what it was like to be a "non-European" in Israel. First they were told that they were not "Kosher" Jews and that they had to undergo reconversion, to legitimize their marriages and children. Then many of them found themselves wasting away, neglected, in "temporary absorption centers."

Years later, many of them are still in these "temporary absorption centers," with no homes and no jobs, forgotten immigrants. In a recent article about these forgotten Jews in the Jewish state, published in *The Jerusalem Post International* (31 March 1990), the writer described an encounter with one of the Falashas. He wrote:

"Unlike the other Ethiopians, who either spoke Hebrew at varying levels of proficiency or had their words translated from Amharic, one man of about 30 spoke a fairly cultured English. Asked where he learned the language and what he did in Ethiopia, the man, who kept a curious smile on his face, at first declined to say. 'It is useless. What I did before has no value.'

A major story about the Peruvian settlers in *The Jerusalem Post International* (24 March 1990) suggests that the group might be followed by other converts to Judaism from Latin America. The newspaper quoted an Israeli rabbi saying that "a number of communities in Latin America have become disgruntled with Christianity and became interested in Judaism." During a trip to Mexico in 1987, the rabbi said, he converted about 100 Mexicans "who just decided that Catholicism was mistaken. There are stories like this all over Latin America," the rabbi said.

In the meantime, Israelis—including "peace camp" Israelis—continue to advise the Palestinians to impress the Israelis of their good intentions by renouncing their right of return!

Arafat On Soviet Jewish Immigration

"Prodded, he said that before he came to Israel two years ago he was a 'branch manager of an agricultural marketing firm in the Gondar region.' Before that, he had studied for two years at a university in Addis Ababa.

"What does he do now? Smiling, he said, 'I study.' 'What?' 'Nothing really. I don't do anything.' I asked more questions, and the man kept smiling, until he finally got up and walked away." □

Abu Jihad Remembered



Occupied Palestine Observes Assassination Anniversary

The second anniversary of the assassination of Palestinian leader Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) was observed throughout occupied Palestine on 16 April. Marches and demonstrations were held in all major cities, including Jerusalem, and hundreds of Palestinian flags, and photographs of Yasser Arafat and Abu Jihad were carried by marchers and displayed on buildings and other structures.

An Israeli assassination squad murdered Abu Jihad on 16 April 1988 at his home in Tunis, as his wife and children watched. Israel, which blamed Abu Jihad for masterminding the intifada, thought that it could demoralize the Palestinians and defuse their resistance to the occupation by killing the Palestinian leader.

On the second anniversary of Abu Jihad's assassination, the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah) issued a statement saying that Abu Jihad continues to be the symbol of Palestinian determination to carry on the struggle until victory. The Unified Leadership of the Uprising called for five minutes of cessation of activity nationwide to mourn his loss.



Israel's Decolonization Crisis

The Palestinian uprising has not yet shaken off Israel's occupation of Palestine, but it has already set in motion the familiar process of dying colonialism. This is the conclusion reached by a Hebrew University expert on decolonization in a lengthy article published by *Ha'aretz* on the second anniversary of the intifada, 8 December 1989.

Professor Emmanuel Sivan wrote that after the 1967 war in which Israel occupied the rest of Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza Strip), it "found itself in the situation of a classical colonial power." The intifada "brought this matter to a head," and has created a crisis for Israeli colonialism.

The author, answering the question "What has changed?" in the colonial relationship between Israel and the colonized Palestinians, concludes that in every aspect of that relationship there has been an impact detrimental to Israeli authority and the prospect of continued control, even though Israel continues to govern the territories.

Military Control

Colonial rule depends on "absolute military superiority of the ruling society over the subject people, due to a monopoly on physical force."

Although Israel still maintains military superiority in the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian methods of resistance (demonstrations, stones, knives, non-payment of taxes) have made control less effective. The situation has not reached the level reached in Algeria or Vietnam "where the army ruled on the ground by day, and the rebels ruled by night," but in the occupied territories "we can discern a certain curtailment of Israel's control over internal systems of relations within Palestinian society."

Economic Dependence

In a colonial situation, the subject group is economically dependent on the ruling group. The colonized are made "to finance a considerable

part of the cost of control via the trade balance," and a system of exploitation is maintained where less remunerative and prestigious jobs fall to the lot of the subject group.

This is the economic situation created by Israel in occupied Palestine. In the mid-1980s, for example, "the surplus in Israel's trade balance with the occupied territories was about \$600 million" a year. Restrictions on trade—giving Israeli producers free access to West Bank/Gaza markets while denying the same opportunity of access to Israeli and world markets to Palestinian producers—reinforced this system of economic dependence and exploitation.

Israel's relation with the Palestinians is going through the familiar crisis of dying colonialism

Although Israel still dominates Palestine's economic life, "some significant changes are discernible." Due to strikes and curfews, "the absence of Arab workers has appreciably hurt the construction industry and caused a significant rise in the price of apartments. Israeli young couples are already paying the price of the intifada."

Furthermore, "due to the boycott of Israeli products and the development of competing Palestinian produce, the Israeli monopoly on textiles, food, and tobacco in the territories has been seriously affected. As of the end of 1987, the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics and the research department of the Bank of Israel have discontinued publishing data about the territories—which in itself indicates some slackening of Israeli control."

The author says that Israeli economists "estimate that the Israeli trade surplus with the West Bank and Gaza has been seriously eroded. Before the intifada, this surplus had contributed significantly (about 25 percent) to decreasing Israel's total trade deficit."

"If we add to this the damage due to indirect exports (especially tourism) and of course the security expenses for the suppression of the intifada, it becomes obvious that the territories are no longer financing the colonial situation. They are becoming more and more an economic burden, although not yet an unbearable one."

Discrimination

Other ways in which colonial control maintains itself is through a system of segregation between the colonizer and the colonized, and through "legal arrangements"—such as the prohibition of political association and activism, and restrictions on civil and human rights. A colonial system is stable when such a system is maintained without the need to resort to force to keep it in place. The system of control is destabilized and enters a period of crisis when it becomes necessary to impose it by force.

The intifada has forced Israel to use frequent coercion to maintain the subjection of the Palestinians. As the occupation authorities resort more and more to killing protesters, demolishing homes, detaining and deporting people, it is exposed and it becomes clearer that "our rule is based on military superiority and on nothing else, certainly not on the acquiescence or gratitude of the governed."

Before the intifada, resistance and repression were not daily occurrences. A facade of "the rule of law" concealed the reality of the relationship between colonizer and colonized. The intifada changed that; "the overall framework is beginning to crack, and who knows how long the rule of law will be able to hold up."

Ideological Facade

Finally, colonialism has an ideological dimension. "Beliefs and opinions or, if you will, ideological and conceptual constraints which are no less essential to the existence of a colonial order than the constraints of

power (military, economic, legal coercion)."

Israeli society, like other colonial societies, has people with a "clear colonial conscience," and people with a "troubled colonial conscience." The latter group "are members of Israeli society who discern the contradiction between the system of democratic values which applies in their society and colonial patterns of rule."

Before the intifada—when repression was not an obvious daily routine—"the distress caused by guilty conscience in the peace camp in Israel was very limited." The illusion of "humane occupation" was easier to maintain. There was no sense of urgency to confront the occupation. In the case of Israelis with a "clear colonial conscience," the majority of the public, "the complete dehumanization of the Arabs and the Palestinians" absolved them of worrying about the situation.

One of "the clear changes which the intifada has brought about" has been "a conspicuous decline in the popularity of purely ideological considerations" in support of Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territories. Israeli opinion is becoming more pragmatic; even those who advocate continuation of the status quo now tend to rely on "security" arguments instead of ideology, and a pragmatic alliance of Labor hawks and realpolitik Likudists now dominates. Historically, pragmatists have been more likely to compromise than ideologues. The result is that "Messianism is no longer popular and is certainly no longer considered by any large segment of the population to be an ideal worth paying a high price for (in blood, wealth, nervous tension, or allocation of free time.)"

The Future

The intifada has created "confusion and uncertainty" in Israeli society. There is a short term attitude toward inflexibility ("iron fist") and a long term belief that "something" needs to be done politically. And there is disagreement on what this something should be: autonomy, or a Palestinian state, demilitarized or not, in confederation with Jordan or not. Israel, in brief, is entering a decolonization crisis.

"It should be recognized that a decolonization crisis develops when, on the one hand, there is an increase in the number and scope of activity of those members of the ruling society

Document

During his recent visit to the Middle East, former President Jimmy Carter met for nearly two hours on 19 March 1990 with local Palestinian leaders in Jerusalem. Carter, accompanied by Mr. Carter and a number of American diplomats including the U.S. Consul in Arab Jerusalem, listened to the Palestinians and exchanged views with them. At the end of the meeting, the following memorandum stating the Palestinian position was given to Mr. Carter:

Our Political Position

Mr. President,

Our intifada has all along raised two main slogans. These are freedom and independence. "Freedom" addresses the unnatural state of occupation of one people by another. Nothing will solve this problem except the end of this occupation. "Independence" addresses the question of our nationhood. We are one people, here and in exile, and we have one shared aspiration, which is self-determination. There is no way to solve this problem except through the establishment of our independent state, where we can exercise our sovereignty.

We have a leadership, which is the PLO. We also have a vision for peace, which was announced by our Palestine National Council in Algiers on November 15th [1988]. In that session of the PNC we declared our independence, and we offered a method by which negotiations between ourselves and Israel can proceed, in an international conference. Our leadership could not have been more clear or forthcoming. Our vision for the future is humanitarian and based on the principle of equality. Our Independence Declaration is a declaration of human rights among individuals as well as among states. Indeed, our vision for peace is a historic landmark. It presents a historic opportunity. It is a bridge between the present state of war to a peaceful future state of peace.

On its part, Israel has in sum come up with nothing. Its political plan of 14th May 1989 is based on negative principles. It rejects a Palestinian state. It rejects the PLO as a negotiating partner. It rejects any change in the present status of the occupied territories. After a transitional period it offers to make peace with Jordan. But although he himself was behind this plan Mr. Shamir, always known for saying "No" to any initiative, proved himself to be true to his own record by saying "No" even to his own plan. The position of the Labour Party is not reliable, either. Especially in recent days we have been hearing Labour Party leaders speak in the language of the Likud: "No" to concessions in Jerusalem, "no" to the PLO, and "no" to the Palestinians in exile.

Mr. President,

Without Jerusalem as the capital of our Palestinian state, without the full participation of our people in exile and the fulfillment of their rights, and without the PLO, there can be no peace. Jerusalem is our capital, we are one people, and the PLO is our representative. On the basis of these principles, we call for the convening of an international conference. In spite of the repression and our suffering, we remain committed to our vision of peace. We remain committed to our challenge. We remain convinced that we shall one day achieve our rights. □

Jerusalem 19th March '90

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who comprehend the contradiction between democracy and colonial rule," people with "troubled colonial conscience." At the same time, a crisis develops when "the subjected succeed in raising the cost of continued colonial rule (economically, militarily, and in terms of moral erosion and international isolation of the ruling society, and with the danger of civil war)." It is the convergence of these two pro-

cesses which brings about liberation from a colonial situation. In Israel's case, "things will get worse before they improve," meaning before Israel is extricated from its colonial relationship with the Palestinians. As the cost of occupation rises due to Palestinian resistance, and as a pragmatic Israeli consensus emerges, the colonial crisis will be resolved "not as graceful rhetoric, but as the dictate of necessity." □

OFFICIAL NOTICE

to

All Palestinians and Palestinian Americans Residing in the United States
fromDepartment of Marital and Civil Registry
State of Palestine

In his capacity as President of the State of Palestine, Yasser Arafat signed a decree in November 1989 establishing a department of marital and civil registry. The department was instructed to issue Palestinian identity cards and family books, beginning December 8, 1989, the second anniversary of the intifada, to all Palestinians wherever they reside.

The issuing of this national identity card is the preliminary step to the subsequent introduction of Palestinian passports.



Who Should Request an Application?

1. Palestinians (and Palestinian Americans) over 15 years of age, wherever they may reside.
2. Palestinian women married to non-Palestinians have the right to confer their nationality on their husbands, should the husbands so wish, and on their children as well.

Where to Request an Application?

1. Embassies of the State of Palestine. In countries that have no diplomatic ties to the State of Palestine, contact Palestinian offices in those countries.
2. For Palestinians and Palestinian Americans residing in the United States, please fill out the information requested below.



TAKE PRIDE IN WHO YOU ARE.

YES! Please rush my application form, complete with instructions, for a Palestinian identity card and family book.

Note: Mail the completed form with a check or money order in the amount of \$2.50 to:

Palestine Affairs Center
1730 K Street, N.W., Suite 703
Washington, D.C. 20006

(Make check payable to: Palestine Affairs Center/ID)

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone (_____
Home) _____ (_____
Office) _____

For additional information call: (202) 223-2439 or (202) 785-8394

In Cold Blood

Tales of Israeli Terror in Occupied Palestine

The trial of an Israeli army colonel revealed details of atrocities committed by Israeli troops against Palestinian protesters. Protesters, testified one witness, "were bound, gagged, laid helpless on the ground and beaten until their hands and legs were broken." The witness, testifying for the prosecution in the trial of Colonel Yehuda Meir, said that "most of the victims stopped screaming after 15 or 20 seconds. Their legs didn't jerk any longer... Then we took the scarves and flannelette [used to gag them] out of their mouths."

The case in question involved eight Palestinians suspected of "hostile activity" such as participation in demonstrations and singing nationalist songs. Lists of such "offenders" were compiled by the Israeli secret police, the Shin Bet, and Israeli troops raided villages and rounded them up. People were arrested by Israeli soldiers, taken to a deserted place and beaten until their limbs were broken, then they were abandoned.

In the case involving Colonel Meir and his goons, the eight Palestinian victims were taken from the village of Beita, and the colonel ordered his men, according to the witness, "to beat them, break their arms and legs, and leave them in the field." Soldiers were chosen "who would not have a problem with that."

"The eight [Palestinians] were divided into two groups," said the witness. "We got them off the bus, bound. We laid them on the ground, among the olive trees, and broke their hands and legs. The emphasis was on doing that quickly, under an officer's supervision."

The deputy commander of the company involved testified in court that the order "to break their hands and legs" was "an accepted term" but was not meant to be carried out literally. A Sergeant Sheffy testified, however, that he understood the order literally and not as "a form of expression."

The witness quoted Colonel Meir saying that the beatings were necessary "because the jails were full," and that the policy came from "high up." The witness said that he knew of another similar incident involving detainees from the village of Hawara near Nablus. □

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Palestine Perspectives

They Were Only Trying to Frighten the Children

The Palestinian town of Rafah, a small town at the southern end of the Gaza Strip near the border with Egypt, has been recently targeted for a particular brand of Israel's "iron fist" policy. It has been sustaining an inordinately high rate of casualties, but above that the Israeli occupation army has been singularly cruel and offensive.

The Israeli newspaper *Hadashot* (24 January 1990) described a particularly frightening and humiliating encounter between the people of Rafah and Israel's occupation troops. One day in January, an Israeli force stormed through the town in the middle of the night and ordered all inhabitants be-

"There were terrible scenes of boys screaming for help from their parents."

tween the ages of 15 and 30 to gather in a square. About 300 people were thus assembled, and they were ordered to remove stones from roads and to erase slogans off walls. They beat up boys in front of their fathers, and when five men from the town's refugee camp tried to protect the children they were forced to drink sewage gushing out of a broken pipe.

Then they ordered people to dig trenches, and when that was done they ordered some of the boys to jump in. The boys were terrified, recalling the case of Palestinians who had been buried alive by Israeli soldiers. "The boys were hysterical," recalled an eyewitness. "There were terrible scenes of boys screaming for help from their parents."

The town's mayor, reported the paper, said that the soldiers forced five of the fathers, who had tried to defend their sons, to drink sewage from a burst pipe. "The soldiers," the mayor added, "cursed the men, insulted their women's honor and beat pregnant women who had come out of their houses when they heard the screams." The soldiers probably didn't mean to harm the children, the mayor explained, they only wanted to frighten them! □

Palestinians in Lebanon: The Suffering Continues



UNRWA field director surveys refugee camp damage

Palestinian refugees have been among the hidden victims of recent fighting between rival Christian forces in Lebanon. The small Dbayeh refugee camp, the only one in the so-called "Christian enclave" northeast of Beirut, has been severely battered during the fighting, and two women lost their lives.

Situated out of the zones of previous conflict in Lebanon, the small camp has been considered the safest shelter for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Its 2,000 inhabitants are Christian Palestinians whose original homes are in the Galilee area of northern Palestine. UNRWA reports that 20% of the camp was destroyed.

New Books

- **Pari Baumman and Rema Hammami, *Annotated Bibliography on Palestinian Women*.** Jerusalem: Arab Thought Forum, 1989.
- **Karima Bennoune, *Israeli Censorship in the Occupied Territories* (Preliminary Report).** Jerusalem and Chicago: The DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, (c. 1990).
- **Richard H. Curtiss, *Stealth PACs: How Israel's American Lobby Took Control of U.S. Middle East Policy*.** Washington: American Educational Trust, 1990.
- **Robert I. Friedman, *The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane, From FBI Informant to Knesset Member*.** New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1990.
- **Anis F. Kassim, ed., *The Palestine Yearbook of International Law, Volume IV, 1987-1988*.** Nicosia, Cyprus: Al-Shaybani Society of International Law, Ltd., 1988.
- **Silvie Mansour, *The Generation of the Intifada*.** Beirut: Institute For Palestine Studies, 1990 (in Arabic).
- **Don Peretz, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising*.** Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1990.
- **A. Samara, et. al., *Palestine: Profile of an Occupation*.** London: Zed Books, 1989.

Israeli Censorship

A new campaign has been initiated in the United States to draw public attention to Israel's denial of Palestinian human rights, particularly its censorship policy which includes "a stringent and far-reaching censorship of books and periodicals."

One of the largest U.S. organizations concerned about censorship is the American Library Association. In January 1990, after reviewing documentation on Israeli censorship, the Social Responsibilities Roundtable Action Council, an umbrella of grassroots activist committees of the ALA, passed the following resolution on the issue:

Resolution

"Whereas there is ample documentation from Article 19 and other organizations showing massive and stringent Israeli censorship in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza and within pre-1967 Israel itself, and

Whereas this censorship, administered by the Israeli military and justified on grounds of Israel's alleged security needs is in reality aimed at suppressing information about and criticism of Israeli treatment of the Palestinians under occupation, and

Whereas this censorship is also aimed at suppressing awareness of Palestinian national and cultural identity and serves to undermine Palestinian academic freedom and education, and

Whereas this sweeping and arbitrary censorship is in violation of universally accepted principles of intellectual freedom and human rights, including Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, and

Whereas the United States has maintained a special relationship with the State of Israel, which receives upwards of \$3 billion annually in American military and financial assistance, while claiming to be the most democratic country in the Middle East,

Be it therefore resolved that the Social Responsibilities Action Council of the American Library Association condemns this massive and stringent Israeli censorship and calls upon the State of Israel to abide by universally recognized norms of intellectual freedom and human rights." □

Commentary

The Things American Taxpayers Are Made to Bankroll!

There is an organization in this country called FLAME (Facts and Logic About the Middle East). It is a tax-exempt organization whose business, it seems, is to persuade Americans of the logic of the Israeli right wing.

It describes itself as a "non-profit educational" organization whose purpose is "to combat media inaccuracies, through public education and publicity." An example of its "educational" effort is paid advertising which, among other things, tells readers that the "land for peace" formula to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a novel idea which has no precedent—and therefore no legitimacy—while "the concept that to the victor belong the spoils is as old as history itself and had really never been questioned before the days of the Israel-Arab conflict." [The *Jerusalem Post International*, 3 March 1990, p. 21]

In other words, the idea that foreign military conquests are illegitimate was just recently invented to get Israel out of the occupied West Bank and Gaza. But the real legitimate concept—which is being questioned by Israel's enemies—is that you are entitled to keep all that your power enables you to grab.

We can understand an Israeli-Zionist front advancing this sort of logic. What we find more difficult to understand is how such a front gets tax-exempt status in the United States. Is the American taxpayer not burdened enough?

Think about it. The U.S. government forgives taxes on money used to undermine U.S. foreign policy. What else is new in the peculiar American-Israeli relationship?

Facts about Flame

- "Flame" was established in San Francisco in 1986 as the West Coast branch of CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America), a Washington-based Israeli mouthpiece. Flame's founder is Gerardo Joffe, 66, owner of a mail-order merchandising company.
- Joffe publicizes right-wing Israeli views through monthly advertisements in *The American Spectator*, *The Atlantic*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Harper's*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *Peninsula Magazine*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *World Magazine*, and *World Press Review*.
- Joffe's tactic is to intimidate critics of Israel and its policy by calling them anti-Semitic. "Fifty years ago," he wrote in a fundraising letter, "Dr. Goebbels's propaganda machine softened up the world and almost succeeded in finishing off the Jewish people. Something quite similar is being attempted now. Israel is being subjected to a ceaseless outpouring of hostile propaganda. It is very effective. Because of constant repetition, even the generally well-disposed U.S. public has begun to believe much of it."
- Examples of the "hostile" propaganda, according to Joffe, are the notion that the Palestine question is the root cause of unrest in the Middle East, the idea that Israel is unwilling to make territorial compromise for peace, that Zionism is racist, and that U.S. aid to Israel is forced on a pliant congress by Jewish pressure groups.
- Israel's deputy foreign minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, the idol of Israel's right wing, supports Joffe's work and follows his advertising campaign "with great interest."
- Contributions to Joffe's crusade on behalf of Israel's right wing are tax deductible in the United States. □

Stop Funding Israeli Oppression of the Palestinians

U.S. Human Rights Group Objects to Aid to Israel

The Cambridge-based Coalition for Palestinian Rights told Congress that "no U.S. taxpayers dollars be used to fund the continued oppression of the Palestinian people by Israel." A Coalition statement submitted as testimony on foreign aid to Congressman David Obey, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations of the House Committee on Appropriations, said that "about half of the population supports a decrease in aid to Israel because of its treatment of the Palestinians."

The Coalition's 3rd of April statement said that U.S. per capita aid to Israel amounts to almost double the federal assistance to residents of the state of Wisconsin. Aid to Israel for fiscal year 1990 is more than \$3 billion of grants, plus \$4 billion of interest debt accumulated from previous grants to Israel. Furthermore, Israel is not being held accountable for the way it uses U.S. assistance the way other recipients are.

"Congressional appropriations of U.S. monies to Israel," the statement said, "are out of step with American public opinion, they are being sent in violation of domestic and international law, and they do not achieve any strategic purpose."

"We believe," the Coalition told Congress, "that there is no justification for continued U.S. aid to Israel when that aid is being used to kill and oppress innocent Palestinians who are struggling for their legitimate rights—unless it be political gain for members of Congress." The statement pointed out that for "every dollar spent by pro-Israel PACs on Congressional campaigns, members of Congress vote \$750 in direct grant aid and military aid to Israel."

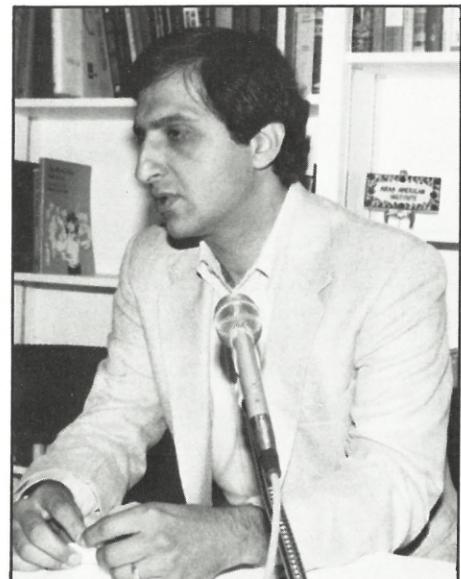
The Coalition asked that provisions of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act be enforced, "in light of Israel's consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights, and that no aid be granted unless it clearly complies with domestic law." □

The Lobby's Favorites in the Senate

Five U.S. senators enjoy this year's blessings of the Israel lobby. They head the list of beneficiaries of pro-Israel political action committees contributions to political candidates. The favorites of the lobby are the following senators: Rudy Boschwitz (R-MN), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Howell Heflin (D-AL), Carl Levin (D-MI), and Paul Simon (D-IL).

The review, done by the Washington-based Arab American Institute found that these five senators have already received more than 50% of all contributions given this election season by the pro-Israel PACs. The Institute's report adds that "PAC analysts estimate that amounts given to the five [senators] in this election cycle should more than double (to over one million dollars) by November 1990. It also says that the pro-Israel PACs are the largest single contributors of all ideological lobbies to the five senators.

A previous report by the Arab American Institute on the pro-Israel PACs, released to the media on 26 March 1990, found that there is a "clear correlation between money donated and favors performed" in support of Israel. Institute executive director James Zogby told the press that the 15 senators with the most consistent pro-Israel record in congress received



Zogby: Senators trade favors with the lobby

an average of \$102,000 each from pro-Israel PACs, while the 15 least supportive senators received an average of only \$8,200.

A substantial study of the use of money by pro-Israel political action committees to influence congress on issues of interest to Israel has been released recently by the Washington-based American Educational Trust. The report, titled *Stealth PACs: How Israel's Lobby Took Control of U.S. Middle East Policy*, was authored by Richard H. Curtiss. □

From the Alternative Press Center

1990-91 Directory of Alternative and Radical Publications. Over 350 periodicals listed; \$3.00. Write: Alternative Press Center, P. O. Box 33109, Dept. D, Baltimore, MD 21218.

Intifada: Year Three

Middle East Report (MERIP) is publishing a special double issue on the Palestinian uprising. *"The Intifada: Year Three"* will include reports by Palestinian and Israeli writers on such issues as collaborators, Soviet Jewish colonists, and the roles of Palestinian and Israeli women. The issue will also discuss the Bush administration's policy on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. *The Intifada: Year Three* will be available on the 23rd of May 1990. □

Calendar of Events

■ **Roots** (Palestine Youth Organization), "Alive With Pride," First National Convention, Washington, DC, 25-27 May 1990.

■ Walk-A-Thon for the People of Palestine, 9 June 1990, organized by **Palestine Aid Society** in the following cities: Ann Arbor, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC.

■ Conference on "The Palestinian Right to Return: Dream or Practical Politics?" sponsored by **The Return Group**, London, 9 June 1990.

■ **Palestine Aid Society**'s 6th bi-annual convention, 28-30 September 1990, Washington, DC.

"Quote Unquote"

"The new factor in the situation is that the U.S. administration no longer finds Mr. Shamir's procrastination amusing."

Editorial
Middle East International
16 March 1990

"The Israeli position [on the peace process] runs counter to positive developments around the globe, from Moscow and Eastern Europe to South Africa."

George McGovern
The Boston Globe
18 March 1990

"Q: Is there anything the PLO could do that would make it acceptable as a partner to the talks?"

"A: No. The only thing it should do is dismantle itself. Because its minimal demand is a Palestinian state."

Yitzhak Shamir (interview)
Jerusalem Post International
3 March 1990

"The Palestinian people need guarantees more than any other party to this conflict. Our people have been victims for decades. We have gone from crisis to catastrophe, from repression to dispossession, from siege to massacre.... The option we have chosen is peace. What we offer is the hand of a proud nation, not the surrender of a vanquished people."

Yasser Arafat
New Outlook
March 1990

New Brief Paper

Discrimination in Israel: The "Zionism is Racism" Controversy is the latest in a series of Brief Papers published by Palestine Research and Educational Center. The paper will be automatically sent to paid subscribers of **Palestine Perspectives**. Others who wish to receive a copy are requested to send a self-addressed envelope to Palestine Research and Educational Center, 9522-A Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031.

An Open Letter to Vice President Dan Quayle

Dear Vice President

You have been championing a crusade against a United Nations General Assembly resolution, approved in 1975, in which the international community found Zionism to be a form of racism and racial discrimination. Leaving aside the question of why the Vice President of the United States feels that the protection of Zionism is one of his duties, we would like to call to your attention the following two relevant facts:

1- The international community, including the government of the United States, agreed on a definition of racism—endorsed in a resolution of the United Nations in 1965—which says that racism is "any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, color, descent or national or ethnic origin."

2- The U.S. government finds Israel guilty of the type of discrimination which constitutes racism according to that internationally-approved definition. The State Department's most recent report on human rights in the world contains the following paragraphs on Israeli discrimination against "non-Jews":

■ "Israeli [meaning Jewish] settlers in the occupied territories are subject to Israeli law, while Palestinians [meaning non-Jews] live under military occupation law. Under the dual system of governance [meaning apartheid] applied to Palestinians—both Muslim and Christian—and Israelis [i.e. Jews], Palestinians are treated less favorably than Israeli settlers on a broad range of issues, including the right to due process, right of residency, freedom of movement, sale of crops and goods, land and water use, and access to health and social services. Israeli settlers involved in security have been treated far more leniently than Palestinians guilty of similar offenses. Offenses against Israelis are investigated and prosecuted more vigorously than offenses against Palestinians. Israelis have residency rights in the occupied territories under Israel's Law of Return [which grants rights to Jews exclusively], regardless of whether they have foreign nationality."

■ "Israel continues to place land under its control for ... purposes which restrict use by Palestinians and discriminate in favor of Israeli settlers [meaning Jews] against Palestinians

[meaning non-Jews].... Palestinians do not participate in the Higher Planning Council, which plans land use Issuance of permits to Palestinians for house construction is tightly restricted."

■ "Palestinians and persons of Arab descent [i.e. non-Jews] entering the West Bank via the Jordan River bridges, regardless of citizenship [including American citizens], are subject to extensive searches, and many complain of harsh and humiliating treatment. Israel limits the funds [non-Jewish] visitors or residents may bring into the occupied territories for Palestinian use to about \$300 per person per month.... There are no limits on funds for Israeli settlers."

Dear Mr. Quayle:

Undoubtedly, you have around you men and women who can explain to you what the above paragraphs mean: that the U.S. State Department finds Israel guilty of offenses defined by the world as acts of racism. They can also tell you that the State Department's report only describes the tip of the iceberg of Israeli discrimination against non-Jews in the Jewish state and its dominions. Don't you think it is more honorable, more befitting your office, and of more service to the national interest to be concerned about Zionist racism rather than the critics of that racism? □

Churches for Peace

Churches for Middle East Peace, a Washington-based group representing national churches and religious organizations, called on President Bush to pursue his administration's efforts to bring about a resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In a letter to the President, dated 9 April 1990, the committee chairman, Robert Z. Alpern, expressed support for the administration's peace efforts, and he asked that the dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization be "deepened and broadened in the months ahead."

Churches for Middle East Peace also expressed support for the President's objection to the settlement of Soviet Jews in occupied Palestine, including Jerusalem, and said that such settlement would be "counterproductive to the peace process." □

Canadian Trade Unions Speak Out

The Quebec trade union movement issued a joint statement on the Middle East in which it declared that it is "unacceptable that another generation of Palestinian children should be born in refugee camps with no hope of ever having a homeland, a Palestinian state, where they can live freely and with dignity."

As trade union organizations, the statement said, we "are particularly concerned about the consequences of Israeli military occupation on Palestinian workers and their organizations. Besides being deprived of their lands and cut off from their traditional way of life, the inhabitants of these territories have no other choice but to offer their services to Israeli businesses, who employ them as cheap labour but grant them very few of the social benefits Israeli workers enjoy." The statement said that "Clearly, Israeli treatment of the Palestinians in the occupied territories gnaws at the conscience of all peoples."

The statement called on the world community "and Canada in particular" to exert greater efforts to reach a just resolution to the conflict. "The opposing parties must be allowed the freedom to choose their representation," it said, "and consequently no one should be opposed to the negotiating role of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is the legitimate representative body of Palestinians ... The truth is, without the PLO, there can be no peace in the Middle East." □

Thatcher on Soviet Colonists

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher joined other world leaders in warning against the consequences of settling Soviet Jews in occupied Palestine. "We have always taken the view," she told a Jewish audience in London, "that land, in return for a secure peace, should be the basis for a solution. I know that the problem would become worse still if Israel were to find homes for Jews from the Soviet Union by settling them in the occupied territories."

"We have all worked very hard to secure the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate," the Prime Minister said. "It would be very ironic and unjust reward for all our efforts if their freedom were to be at the expense of the rights, the homes and the land of the people of the occupied territories."

Europe and Japan Also Object

The twelve members of the European Community also asked Israel not to "permit or encourage" the settlement of Soviet Jews in occupied Palestine. An EEC communique from Brussels said the European Community is "seriously concerned by recent proposals aimed at settling immigrants to Israel in the occupied territories."

EEC members asked Israel not to "compromise the chances for peace in the region by permitting or encouraging Soviet Jewish immigrants to settle in the occupied territories." They reaffirmed their view that settlements in the occupied territories are illegal.

Japan joined a growing international voice against the colonization of Palestine with a foreign ministry statement that the settlement of Soviet Jewish immigrants in the occupied territories "is a great obstacle to the Middle East peace process." □



Arafat and Mandela

Mandela about Arafat: "Like us, he is fighting a unique form of colonialism."

Arafat to Mandela: "We are in the same trench."

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The Ailments of Israeli Society

A few months ago, thirty Israeli academics from a variety of fields met for two days to diagnose the ailments of Israeli society. An article about the gathering, published in the Israeli daily *Davar* (24 December 1989), observed that "it was highly symptomatic that not one politician attended" the conference. "Why should they, the responsible parties," asked the author, "face the facts?" The participants were in agreement that "Israeli society is in a process of deterioration, is sunk in severe crisis." And they agreed that the principal cause of Israel's problems is that it has created a colonial situation vis-a-vis the Palestinians.

One study submitted to the conference concluded that Israel, "formerly one of the developed countries, has lost this status." The author of the study, professor Shahar, said that "twenty years ago Israel was one of the developed countries of the world. Since then, most of the developed countries had advanced and Israel had been left behind." He concluded that now Israel belongs to the category of "countries of the formerly developed world."

The *Davar* article summarized the findings of other studies:

Dan Horowitz—The Israeli political system used to have conflict control mechanisms. The conflicts were not solved, but they could be lived with. Now, the nature of the conflicts has changed, some of them have become fundamental and the political system is incapable of solving them.

Eric Cohen—Classical Zionism succeeded in integrating contradictory components: universalism with particularism, and secularism with religiousness. This combination has disintegrated and we are now in the post-Zionist era, in which no new ideology has formed, for which reason the state lacks legitimizing grounds.

Ze'ev Sternhall—The liberal shell of Israeli democracy is steadily weakening and the destructive forces of organic nationalism are gaining strength. The longer the pressures on the system continue, the stronger the tribal trends become.

Moshe Lissak—The developments taking place since the outbreak of the intifada are an inverted image of the thirties. Then, Palestinian society failed at the institutionalization process while we succeeded. Now, they are progressing and we are regressing. Social cohesion is deteriorating, security theory is collapsing, dangerous and apparently irreversible tensions have arisen in society's relations with the military.

David Krechmer—The Israeli legal system has been forced to accept the reality of the occupation. As it aspires by nature to avoid divorcing itself from socio-political realities, it resigns itself to human rights violations. □

Russian Colonists Shore Up Israeli Right Wing

One of the byproducts of the wave of Soviet Jewish immigration now underway is that it is giving a new lease on life to the Israeli settlement movement. The right wing Jewish settlers groups are no longer perceived as fanatical fringe groups, but as necessary and useful instruments for the "absorption" of the new colonists.

An article on Russian settlers in the West Bank in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* (2 February 1990), says that the chairman of an Israeli organization which receives Russian newcomers and helps them settle, and who in the past has opposed settlement in the occupied territories, now cooperates with settler organizations. "When it comes to immigration," he was quoted saying, "I am willing to befriend even the devil." The article also says that Ben-Gurion Airport recently added on its computers the absorption center of Kfar Adumim settlement in the West Bank as a place to go in search of housing.

The article also says that Russian newcomers, many of whom are not familiar with the politics of the region, are often enticed into settling in the occupied territories with the promise that even if the West Bank is returned to the Arabs under a future political agreement, the Jewish settlers would make money in compensation for moving out, just like settlers did when the Sinai was returned to Egypt five years ago. □

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